(32)

1908
Wed

Glencarron Lodge
Achnashellach
Ross-shire.

Aug. 26th

My Billy.

I had a nice long letter from you yesterday, which I did not read at a cheerful breakfast table. For one of the trials of existence here is that one doesn't get one's letters till 2 in the afternoon. But I read yours & Clive's after tea when he came in & it was raining - & at the same time I had letters from Walter Lamb & Sons. So you can imagine which letter was best. Walter Lamb wrote quite a good letter, telling me of Sir Th's successes.

It was very different from yours in style — of course — Have you seen Lytton's poems? By the way, you must send them back before they enter the whirl pool in your room at Fitzroy — or else I know we shall never see them again. Send them to Gordon Sq. with "not to be forwarded" on them.

What inspiration would you draw, I wonder, from the male conversation here? At lunch they talked of wine — at dinner of beer — after dinner of cigars. I feel that if only I were writing a novel this would probably be an unequalled opportunity for me to hear what male conversation is

really like- for me silent
& solitary female I think
makes practically no difference
to their talk. It is such un-
diluted male that it quite
amuses me, as watching
some strange beast would.
There is a possibility that Mrs
Greg will come here. I hope
she will as I believe she
is charming & intelligent.
My poor little beast- it is
worse to think of your troubles.
I hope you won't go back
to London on Saturday, for
surely you'd have heaps of
time to get your finders seen
to on Tuesday & Wednesday.
Tidal could only just do a
little patching up which couldn't
take more than an hour or so.
Let me know what you
do in good time. Of course
its useless to say so, but

you wont get this letter till
Friday at earliest. But if you
do go to London on Saturday
you must expect letters to
be deranged for I might in
that case write there after
today. I am doing all my
purchases which aren't made
by writing to the Stores - even
for things like pins. I find
it saves me an enormous
amount of time & tiresomeness.
Today there is a mist over
the hills. I believe they are
going stalking in spite of it
& I think I shall stay at
home as we can't go to lunch
with them when they're after deer.
It is damp & windy & I think
of returning to my Berwick
which has a charming account
of Wombach - Do you remember
it? There is a touching story of the
Lairds after 6 weeks of fasting.
Have you heard of Silas's at a child get?
Yours VB.

T. DARSOUS 23

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Glencarron Lodge
Achnashellach
Ross-shire.

1908

Aug. 27th

My Billy-

I must write to Manor. Tho' it is possible that when this gets there you may have left for London. I hope not. I dare guess Reuel what we're going to do today. It's blowing a gale & has been pouring. But I think most of them are going to fish. I spent yesterday painting animals for Julian Cranbrook & reading Berwick which gave me great pleasure. He doesn't avoid the word copulate. There is very little literature in this house, but

no me, not even Cline, dreams
of reading. I believe I do
more than anyone else.
Mrs Greg is coming today
& tomorrow which I am
glad of. A charming female
right to shine at her full
value in this unsocial fe-
males. I am too like a
male myself. The looks that
you imagine cast at me after
dinner never annoy me. I
do little or none of the talking.
Mr Greg is really amusing.
Though his remarks written
down would probably sound
quite flat. Would it amuse
you at all to hear him say,
summing up the talk about
whether reason or prose is
the more acceptable present,

"There is venison buried all over England!" I don't think it is amusing. but he has an odd original mind & he thinks of things that have evidently just struck him & don't amuse him till he has said them. He is very fine to look at, with a good head & very deep set eyes. very tall & large with a rather loud voice - Mr Armour reminds me strongly of Peter Shudd. He is not nearly so incoherent, but he has often very much the same manner. He is strongly very nice & kind & quite aware of his own limitations but he talks away steadily & harmlessly. But then is an inventor with a vengeance.

Clive says he is going to write to you today & is going to send it to London in case you have gone there – so you will certainly miss me & utter at those letters. which is really your own fault for not telling us of your movements. However this one will be much long. I feel painfully incompetent to write letters & becoming more & more as I see the growing strength of the exquisite literary critical atmosphere distilled by you & Clive with [illegible] eyes intent to pounce upon convoluted sentences & want of rhythm. What will it be after I have been with you both in Italy? I shall only dare to write to Swans. Do you burn my letters? Not that it really much matters for no one ever takes the trouble to read them, though I dare if you don't. Yours V.W.

(34)

1908

Glencanon Lodge
Achnashellach
Ross-shire.

Aug. 28

My Billy -

It has been pouring & blowing & hailing with intervals of sunshine for the last 24 hours & more. I like hearing it when I'm safe in bed but it's the devil to get out in. I'm afraid I shall have to write to London as apparently you do mean to go on Saturday. You will have a melancholy Sunday in London, probably with Saxon, & I can't help feeling that all your business could be done on Tuesday & Wednesday. However at this distance such remarks are useless. I had quite

an interesting post yesterday -
a letter from Adrian & one
from Lytton - which surprised
me a good deal. He is some-
where in Scotland, not so very
far from Stirling & says he is be-
ginning to take upon himself
the mystery of things - & is
becoming comparatively reflected.
I must answer him, the
thought of which alarms me a
good deal. However I reflect
that I write to you - & in
spite of all your partiality
for your family you are a critical
little animal & yet apparently
read my letters. After all God
at my age I am hyper sensi-
tive criticisms of two dogs. not
even in the things I mind
about, of which letter writing
isn't one. Adrian writes, not

such an amusing letter as the last from Munich. I'm not sure he isn't rather bored, as he says letters are very welcome - Saxon had just left him in a dismal drizzle which seemed to harmonise tolerably well with his disposition. Who would have dared to say such a thing of Saxon to Adrian two years or even a year ago! It is wonderful to foresee the day when everyone will say openly that he is a bore & he will be watched for as we used to watch for Mr Sibbs or Sidney Lee - but that is the only way in which Julian & Belinda can be expected to look upon him.

I believe Mrs Sneyd comes today. Clive is going out - runs to Hill a stag. Mr Bell & Mr Arnim to dinner & I shall be left - with Mrs Grey to welcome Mrs Sneyd.

perhaps they'll wish me out of the way. So I shall be prepared to make myself scarce. My hearts so on I have now painted for Julian's benefit a tiger, an elephant, a pony, a rat, a mouse, a dromedary, a bat, a stag, a rhinoceros, a squirrel, a hare, a monkey & a dolphin! I must do two more & then I shall send them to Dorothy. But I am afraid that my subtle subtleties will be missed in red twill. Julian is said to be well & good, but it is rather melancholy, I admit, to think that he is now giving all his favours to the Bells, his choicest smiles & his most engaging tricks. I shall have to devote all my energies for about a week after we get back, to carrying favour with him again, & then I look forward to seeing him develop into the most attractive of babies this winter.

Yr — V.B.

(25)

1908

Glencannon Lodge
Achnashellach
Ross-shire.

Aug. 25th

My Billy.

A letter full of lamentations from you - all because there's no post out here on a Sunday. You won't get a letter that I wrote yesterday like you get in London either, if you do as you now say you will & stay on at Manchester - But perhaps your own reflections will tell you the reason of that. I shall only write once more I suppose - perhaps not even that - for I could not write till Monday & you would not get that till Wednesday morning probably - when I shall see you.

So don't expect to hear again. You said you would come round to see us on Wednesday morning - but you mayn't have time. Anyhow we shall meet somehow. Don't fail to go to Tidal even if your work is all right again. It would be such a pity if you couldn't enjoy Fra Angelico because of it. I can buy your palette if you like - as it would fit you if it fitted me & I am trying to have nothing to do in London except pack. I shall be extremely glad to leave this although I have been quite happy here. The last few days it has been pouring & wretched in spite of moments of sun. & now, Mrs Greg having got here yesterday after

a long journey & a night in the train, Mr Grey has a telegram to say that his father aged 81 is seriously ill. & they will have to go off again today. It is a pity as I like her very much. not so much as I like him though I think. She is small & delicate - evidently like many of you have seen, inclined to be a valetudinarian. She has been & still is very pretty & I should think she's intelligent too. She snubs him a good deal & is a little too strict with him. but on the whole they're very amusing together & this place without them will be decidedly duller. Luckily however we haven't much more of it. On Sunday I believe we are to go to lunch with some people called Bainbridge who are our only neighbours. I

dont want to go but I expect I shall have to. & then we have only one more day here. I had a letter from Madge yesterday, beginning "I always feel that you are one of the real friends of my life"! I dont know what called it forth as I had only answered her letter about her nurse-maid - However it went on quite ordinarily & domestically - She says Janet cant come to us in October, as it will be Halford's turn to come to London with her & Barbara. but she will come at Christmas. Halford imagines he is going to stay with you & live at the Zoo. The Cornishes as usual are breeding like rabbits. for she says that Cecilia Fisher wants Lianne her nurse-maid. so I suppose, she is expecting to produce soon. Have you heard anything of Sibyl? When she wrote to me she said the baby might arrive at any moment. Make you be glad to see the face of your pussy once more. Yours ever — I.B.

(39)

1909

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

Feb 7.

Dearest Eleanor.

When shall I see you again? You know that I have not been able to go out much this week & yet you have not been here — you say because of the spleen — Has it ever kept you away from me before? I didn't know it. You go on to give as a further reason for not coming, that when

you see me you conside in
me. but really you
seem able to do that just
as well - perhaps better.
in writing. Certainly it is
more permanent than talk.

You may guess, having
read so far, that my
temper is not of the
sweetest. & to tell you the
truth it does make me
very angry to see you
sitting at Rogers feet in this
way. Do, for goodness'

take pull yourself together
& behave like a woman.
As you say, what is it in
him that you love? Of
course he is charming, with
many very fine qualities,
& in fact hasn't half the
faults you lavish upon him;
but, my dear Eleanor, as
for stepping off the world
with him into hurricanes,
icebergs, phantom ships &
skeleton crews, I should
much sooner expect to
find myself in the lift
of the Tube. (I should think
it much pleasanter too: but
no doubt you wouldn't.)

This may all be very brutal but I can't help longing to shake you into sitting up on your hind legs. Come & give me a chance of doing it in person. I never set at you at first hand now it is always through ~~Rufus~~ James that I have to find out how you are behaving & his accounts cannot be taken too literally. You seem to have seen a great deal of him lately.

I heard from your cousin Lady Eastnor yesterday. She sends you a message about Persian embroideries. But

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46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

you have probably seen her since you saw me. so I will not deliver it. She is a curious old lady. Do you really think her so old & corpse-like? I think that if she were lying with Sir Julius. as you picture them, she would be itching to investigate the next coffin & would beside have a vast company of evil spirits to revel with her nightly. I am convinced that the part you

thinks she has buried only
waits the right audience
to jump up like a Jack
in the box. She has often
allowed me glimpses of its
nose. You know the
scandal about Plummels
Towers? I heard the first
day that the child was
only 11! She fascinates
me too, almost the most
marvellous thing about her is
that I believe one can con-
fide in her with safety,
which makes her doubly

fascinating & quite irresis-
tible as a confidante.
I must stop writing
away as if I had nothing
better to do. It is late
at night & James has
deserted me. He said he
was going to see Rose
& might look in on you
on the way, so I shall
perhaps hear of you
from him - as usual.
Good night
C. P.